

The Athenian Mercury.

Tuesday, March 12. 1695

Quest. 1. **T**HE Gentleman who loves one that is resolved not to marry, and is beloved by one whom he cou'd fancy well enough, were it not for the former's promise to marry him if he had the lucky Lot, is at last persuaded to put the case to your Arbitration, and will Court the Loving Lady if you advise him to it?

Ans. For all the peoples mistaken Notion, a good thing easily attain'd is as valuable, as when it costs us ten times the fatigue and trouble; and since this first mistress is either better, or not so good, as you deserve, e'en let her alone, and pursue her whose better part you already have in her affections, and therefore the whole will be attain'd with less difficulty.

Quest. 2. Whether under the pressure of some great Misfortune, as a Law-Suit for all one's Substance, or such like surprizing fatal Accidents, Madness may not reasonably be desired if it can drown the sense of the misfortune.

Ans. No, since to be deprived of the use of our Reason is the greatest unhappiness that can befall us on this side the Grave, for all other Evils are, we believe, commonly design'd for the benefit of the Afflicted Persons, tho' tis difficult for them to think it at such a time; but to be Distracted, is for this Life worse than not to be at all.

Quest. 3. You are desired to give your opinion, which way a Gentleman should take the following letter, for a letter of friendship or love, the parties not having seen one another above a month or six weeks: She is married to a relation of his a Cousin; she is about fifty years old, but one that values her self much upon her wit and parts as she fancies; she is very ugly, ill shaped, and very satirical, and one that is jealous of her Husband, who has been formerly obliged by this Gentleman she now writes thus to, but she was never acquainted till now, therefore he desires to know what answer he ought to return her in point of good manners.

One thing he desires you to remark in the first part of her Letter, that the token she mentions to have received from the Gentleman at parting to give her mother was a Kiss. He is at a great loss, and desires your speedy answer: being an old Beau, and not willing to disoblige the fair Sex let them be of what sort they will, from the Chambermaid to the Lady, &c.

The Letter.

I have a far greater Passion, my dear Patient, to know how you are, than when I was in town, tho' you was then my first thoughts. Think well of this trouble, since we all naturally Love to please our selves, and this is the way to extract a great proportion of my satisfaction from you.

I writ to you as I came through---which I hope you received; that I might by the last Post have an account of your Health.

I was so sure of a letter from you, tho' it came not to (---) that I sent to the Post-Office, in (---) I shall value my self at no small rate if I can out-do you in friendship, whom all else come so far short of. I gave your token to my mother with much less pleasure than I received it. I would be very sorry you wanted your nurse at the rate I do your attracting conversation, the knowledge of which is all that makes me not repent my coming from Scotland.

I am afraid I shall force you to wish, by troubling you thus frequently, my esteem were as far remote from you, as the spark would have his Ladie's constancy and vertue. If I be capable of Gratitude and Generous friendship there is but one kind of relation in the world can give you more, then you do most firmly possess from, Dear (---) Yours for ever, if I be--

Post-Script.

" My service to (---) I wish you a merry
" Easter and 40 more as good. I am afraid you
" are not careful of your self, nor my maid to
" get you what you can eat; I am angry at
" this silly concern that brought me hither till
" you was perfectly well: You never slept less
" when your Illness was at the worst, than I
" have done since I parted from you; which is
" now 3 weeks: I had one remarkable slum-
" ber made pleasant by a dream of you; I saw
" you in your best night gown and your face
" was as red as the lining of it: have a care of
" a dose of Claret; I always interpret my own
" dreams, especially when I Dream of my best
" friends, and you are so.

Ans. Verily, Spark, if such an obliging Complimental letter, and all that, cou'd not inspire you how to make a suitable answer, 'tis very probable your kisses wou'd please better than your letters; therefore we e'en leave you to choose which way you'll return the Civility, and shall only give a little caution to our intriguing wou'd-be-witty Ladies, who very often exceed the bounds of decency to shew a little imaginary Galantry and unnatural mistaken wit: since they may see by it how liable they are to scandals, by trusting their reputations in the hands of these brainless fops, who at the best make them the subject of their common discourse, amongst themselves; ay and think they use them very Civilly too if they don't expose them to all the world.

Quest

Quest. 4. I desire to know whether divination has been always supposed to be a Natural property of the Soul, or a special gift from heaven? If virginity or any dispositions of mind, or circumstance of birth or fortune have been looks upon more proper than others to qualify a man for the spirit of Prophecy? And whether, as is reported of 'em, the Egyptians believed all Children to be Prophets?

Ans. Men have been of divers opinions in respect to this as well as to other things. *Ammonius* in *Plutarch* positively maintains that 'tis a Natural gift, from this Principle; that since our soul remembers things which no longer subsist, it may very well give some account of the past that it has not seen, and foretell future things which have not yet happened. To which may be answered, that whatsoever has presented it self to us leaves traces in our brain, whereas those we have not seen cannot imprint any there. And one *Mr. Petit* in a dissertation of his upon this subject says, that Prophets foretel nothing, but what all men have some Idea of, if each thing were considered separately; as for example; When the Prophet *Isaiah* predicted that a Virgin should bring forth a Son, how new, says he, and unheard of soever this event might be, yet every one very distinctly apprehended what the Prophet meant, having a clear Idea of Virgin and of bringing forth a Son; therefore he believes the difficulty to consist in the collection of these Ideas, which he affirms not to be greater than what respects the memory. The Images of things subsisting separately in our minds, they there unite after such or such a manner when we think of 'em, and disunite again as soon as we are diverted from them, they being united only by thought. And that the collection the soul makes of many Ideas by the memory, which have been present, the union whereof subsists no longer, is not less wonderful than the minds predicting many things which it has never seen, nor heard of. This opinion is refuted by considering that the object of Prophecy relates to contingent things, which equally may or may not happen, which also absolutely depends on the free will of man, over which no creature hath any power; therefore no one can foresee the actions of free intelligences, but that perfect Being which governs them, so that the Spirit of Prophecy is only the gift of God. Tho granting it the immediate gift of Heaven, it is the opinion of many persons, it does not follow from thence, but that some natural dispositions are fitter to receive it than others. Some of the Schoolmen and Commentators upon *Aristotle* have thought that a sublime mind and a great soul who has been well educated, is the most proper to penetrate into the obscurity of future events. Yet these vain Notions are confounded by experience, God having generally chose his prophets from amongst the most illiterate persons, probably, lest if he had bestow'd this gift upon the Learned, they, being naturally a little proud, might have lookt upon it as a prerogative of a great wit.

As for that opinion of the Antients who thought Virginity might contribute to the spirit of prophecy, 'twas only caused by an effect of the Devil's malice, who to impose on the people commanded that whoever approached his Altars should abstain from the commerce of women.

*Vos quoque abesse procul jubeo, discedite ab aris
Quis tulit bellerna gaudia nocte Venus.
Casti placent superis, pura cum veste venite,
Et manibus puris sumite fontis aquam.*

And yet he took all sorts of forms, and made them a thousand offers to tempt their Chastity.

'Twas really the opinion of the Egyptians, that children naturally divined, and that all their actions

were good or bad presages: But their thoughts upon this was no more than what we still sometimes see amongst many superstitious persons, who observe whatsoever children do, and draw conjectures from it. Altho this plainly shows that the Antients did not believe a great genius a requisite qualification for a Prophet. And therefore they chose a Country maid who was chaste and civilly educated, for the Priestess of *Apollo*. And 'tis not improbable but the Devil made use of this craft the better to imitate the true Prophets; as *Plutarch* tells us he once caused fire to fall from heaven upon the sacrifice of *Paulus Aemilius* in the Town of *Amphipolis*.

Advertisement.

Next Thursday will be Published the History of all Religions in the World: From the Creation down to this Present Time. In Two Parts. The first containing their Theory, and the other relating their practices; each divided into Chapters, by the several Heads, or Common Places of Divinity, Viz. The Object of Religious Worship, the Place, the Time, the Persons Officiating, the Manner, and the Parts of Worship, &c. With Various instances upon Every Head. To which is added, a Table of Heresies: as also a Geographical Map, shewing in what Countrey Each Religion is Practised. Written in a different Method from any thing yet published on this Subject. By *William Turner*, M. A. and Vicar of *Walberton* in *Sussex*. London, Printed for *John Dunton*, at the *Raven* in *Jewen-Street*. And are also to be sold by *Edm. Richardson*, in the Upper Court in *Scalading-Alley*, near the *Poultry-Church*. 1695.

An Invitation to a new Sale for Tobacco, in which there will be two Blanks to one Benefit. There will be delivered out 16000 Tickets at 12 d. per Ticket, for which there will be 5084 Benefit Parcels of the best Cut and Dried Tobacco, one Parcel 150 pound weight, one 100, two 80 pound each, two 60, four 50, four 25, ten 20, twenty 15, thirty 10, sixty 5, one hundred 4, two hundred 3, four hundred 2, four thousand two hundred and fifty 1; first drawn 10, last drawn 10 pound, Benefit or not. By *Ch. Fisher*, the Corner of *Pope's-head-Alley*; or at his House, the Ship in *Broadstreet*, at *Jonathan's*, and the *Barbado's* Coffee-house, near the *Exchange*, and *Lloyd's* Coffee house in *Lombard-street*; where you may have Proposals at large.

The Prettiest Jewel of all Adventures, at 10 s. per Ticket, is to be drawn on Thursday the 28th of this instant March.

Tickets and Proposals may be had of Captain *John Passil*, at the *Kings-Arms*; *Mr. Nathaniel Ragdale*, at the *King's-Head*; *Mr. Edward Harrison*, at the *Hen* and *Chickens*; *Mr. John Gilpin*, at the *Golden-Anchor* in *Cheapside*; *Mr. Thomas Minshall*, at the *Golden-Falcon*; *Mr. Robert Cole*, at the *Golden-Anchor* in *Fleet-street*; *Mr. Samuel Layfield*, at the *White-Horse* in *Lombard-street*; *Mr. Roberts*, at the *Dragon*, near the *New-Exchange* in the *Strand*; *Captain Pitts*, in *Holbourn*; *Mr. Andrew Coleman*, in *East-Smithfield*; *Mr. Richard Adams*, at the *Black-Horse* in the *Strand*; *Goldsmiths*; *Mr. Lloyd*, at his Coffee-House in *Lombard-street*; *Mr. Sanders*, at the *Carlisle-Coffee-House* near *Guild-Hall*; *Mr. Buckeridge*, at his Coffee-House, near the *George-Inn* in *Aldersgate-street*; *Mr. Coltman*, at his Coffee-House, near the *King's-Head Tavern* in the Borough of *Southwark*; *Mr. James Mathburn*, Mercer, at *Oxford*; *Mr. Edmund Anlaby*, Ironmonger, at the Corner of *Greek-street* near *Soe-Hoe*; *Mr. Brown* at his Coffee-House in *King's Street*, *Westminster*; *Mr. George Webb*, at his Coffee-House, in *West-Smithfield*; *Mr. Thomas Eve*, Tallow-Chandler, near the *Bell* in *Shoole-lane*.

All which Persons stand Accountable for the Sums by them Received.